

CLIVE BARKER'S
BOOK OF THE DAMNED

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A HELLRAISER COMPANION

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**CLIVE BARKER'S BOOK OF THE
DAMNED: A HELLRAISER COMPANION**

Volume One

Published in Canada by Egmont Comics

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Quebec 1997

ISBN 0-89611-840-7

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COMPOSITIONS

7 x 10

No. 36663

48 Leaves

from the desk of
CLIVE BARKER

This book was delivered one year ago, to the day, to the Epic editorial offices. It was just before all Hallows Eve; Hallowe'en. While I make no testament regarding its authenticity, I do offer one simple warning:

From here, proceed at your own risk.

Clive Barker

I can't even remember why I was in the city that night. I just knew I couldn't leave. I wandered through the labyrinth of concrete, steel and glass, walking empty streets, beneath the sickly, yellow wash of lamplight. I remember watching the traffic lights strung in rows over empty intersections silently blinking from green to yellow to red. I remember shouting as loud as I could, screaming, trying to fill the vast silence; then listening to my voice rise and fade, listening for something to take its place. I remember thinking that if something were to happen, it would happen now, in a city that should not be this empty on a night that should not be this cold; when I heard the bell.

It was a low pitched, dull clinking sound like a heavy, iron cowbell that had lost its tone to rust. It faded. I stood quietly and after a moment, I heard it again carried by a cold wind off the lake. I turned towards it, curious, drawn to its hollow, lonely sound.

I found him on Michigan Avenue, standing alone in a white pool of light in front of a diner. He was wearing two heavy wooden signs, draped over his shoulders, covering his front and back. His arms absently swung the bell back and forth as he started out towards the water at the sheet of night; a lightless sky stitched seamlessly to the lake's black horizon, pulled over the city like a shroud.

As I neared him I read his sign: "The Age of Pain Draws Near! Abandon this world! The Dark God is Coming!"

I smiled. As prophets of doom go, he was certainly dedicated. I started to walk past him when I saw he was staring at me. I wanted to look away, to pretend that I didn't see, but I couldn't. It was his face. His features were buried beneath a pocked and gnarled mass of white, scar tissue. His nose was a tubercous mound spread across his face like mashed cauliflower. There was a hole torn in his cheek through which you could see his broken jagged molars. The more I stared, The more grotesque and unreal he became.

He spoke first, "Don't kill the messenger. People don't like bad news. They are afraid of the truth."

"What truth?"

He seemed to be smiling. It was impossible to tell.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?" Reaching for a key around his neck, he turned to the door of a greasy diner. "It's okay. I clean the floors."

I followed him inside. The floor was still wet and smelled of ammonia and lemons. He sat down his sign and poured the coffee into the white cardboard cups. We sat across from each other at one of the orange plastic tables, sipping at the scalding coffee. He pulled a cigarette out with a hand as mutilated as his face; fingers without nails, jutting out in odd, unnatural directions. He lit it, sucking hard on it, filling his lungs and as he exhaled, I stared, fascinated as the smoke curled out of the hole in his cheek.

"Have you seen a movie called 'Hellraiser'?"

I nodded. I couldn't recall much about it but I did remember my date's fingernails digging in my arm.

"It has always found a way to entertain, to entice and seduce. Yesterday a traveling carnival, today a movie."

"What has?"

"Hell."

He pulled a large canvas bag from beneath the table and handed me the contents; a disheveled collection of art, pages of pictures, paintings and photographs. As I turned each page, he told me its... story.

He has been called the "Prince of Hell" and the "Favorite Son," but it was not always so. There was a time he waited the judgment of the Dark God on his knees, bound by hook and chain, accused of the most grievous sin known in hell. He had broken the rules of Leviathan's order.

It had happened not long after his new-birth. She was not the first female he had welcomed to Hell, but he knew immediately that she was different. Instead of the screaming, the pleading and crying that is typical of the newly damned, she was smiling, reaching towards him with her arms extended.

"I know you are there. I can feel you." She was blind and yet she moved slowly but directly at him. "You feel beautiful. Are you an angel?"

Her smile gleamed even in the darkness of Hell's hall; perfect, white teeth behind warm, red lips. He stared as she stumbled toward him in innocence. The closer she came, the more uncomfortable he felt. Finally, when her open hand grazed against his chest, he could stand it no longer. He destroyed her.

Quickly, he plucked the eyes from another, replacing hers as he re-made her.

"I can see," she said. The eyes were blue, bright blue and she held them wide open as if she were afraid to blink. "I can see."

She looked at him and began to cry. Now, he thought, this was more like it. But then, She ran at him, throwing her arms around him. He was the most beautiful thing she'd ever seen. "You are an angel. You must be."

He was confused. She looked up at him, the big blue eyes gleaming with tears, the smile still so bright. Her thin, delicate fingers, with a butterfly's touch, traced his lips.

"I love you Angel. I will love you forever." She took his hand and they lay down upon the cold stone, upon the blood stained floor of hell, together.

When they were finished, he opened the door that she had come through. He had no choice now.

"You must go!"

DOC KAUFMAN'S TRAVELING
CIRCUS

WITH WONDERS FROM THIS WORLD AND
BEYOND



A DAZZLING ARRAY OF SPLENDOR
TWO SHOWS DAILY

ALL WELCOME
NO ONE REFUSED



ADMISSION FREE
NO REFUNDS

SHOWS START AT 8:00pm & MIDNIGHT



Illustration by [illegible]

Then, she cried, pleaded and screamed. He held her face, wiping away her tears. There was no time. He knew what he must do.

"Believe me when I tell you, the angels you'd find here are not those you could love. Not yet. Not now."

Gripping her head firmly, he pressed his thumbs against the eyes; the big blue eyes that he would keep with him forever, and gouged them out. Her screams vanished as he pushed her through Hell's open door, back into the darkness of the world from which she'd come. He closed the door and turned to face his accusers, alone.

The Dark God, Leviathan, listened as the Cenobite pleaded his defense.

"My Lord, my mission is the administration of pain. I hold that I have done more to alter this woman than would have been possible here. I gave her what she dreamed of then, showed her the shallow emptiness of that dream. I returned her to the dark world she would have sold her soul to escape. I can think of no worse fate for her than to spend her life trapped there, in that private darkness, trying to find a way out, a way back to her dream, her dark dream, of our order."

The Dark God enjoyed the argument, amused by its simple, clean logic.

The Cenobite heard Leviathan's voice in his head. "True, she will suffer and as she does, so shall you. But her pain will end with death, yours might last an eternity, sustained by the slightest semblance that digs through the scabs of memory, drawing blood once more. Answer this, before your sentence is passed: Why? Why should I allow you to endure?"

The Cenobite looked full at the god, and said, "To inflict great suffering, Lord, one must know great suffering."

Yes, Leviathan thought. This son is delightful. The chains vanished,

The package was the size of a baby. It lay on his coffee table, wrapped in brown paper and bound with twine. It had been post marked in a dozen different countries but it was impossible to tell from which it had originated or for how long it had been traveling. Phillip LeMarchand knew only that it had arrived at his door addressed to "resident."

Having left the architectural profession years before, he had come here, to New York, to starve in the name of art and "more lofty pursuits than the mundane and oppressive tedium of a drafting table." He was a sculptor who preferred the geometric precision of metal to the other typical mediums. Recently though, his art had become a torture, a private hell, as he tried to force the steel towards his latest vision only to be frustrated by repeated failure. In tears he would fall to his knees and pray for the answer.

He had heard of a material, a substance of such perfect order that it could serve perfectly as the medium through which he might create his most perfect work. What dreams he might create from such a substance!

Now, peeling back the last of the brown wrapping, staring at what he mistook for a cut of stone, a black stone that was forever cold to the touch, he did not consider what god it was that had answered his prayers. Staring into his own reflection, at his own smile, he did not care.

A scroll, included with the stone, detailed the almost alchemical process necessary to transmute the element to a



THE FARTSHORN TOWER

CONDEMNATION BOX

8 LEVEL PATH:

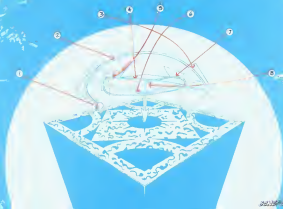
STAIRS TO FLOOR 7:

- ① FLOOR OF CHASTISEMENT
- ② STAIRS OF BANISHMENT
ELEVATOR TO FLOOR 21
- ③ PATH OF CORRECTION
- ④ ROUTE OF DOOMAGE
- ⑤ TABLE OF CASTIGATION



STAIRS TO FLOOR 55:

- ⑥ TRIAL OF PUNITION
FROM ROOFTOP
- ⑦ PATH OF FALSE ACCUSATION
- ⑧ ASPECT OF THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD (GLITTER)
- ⑨ ENTRANCE TO AFAR



THE CARPENTER HANSEN'S DISEASE CENTER-MEDIATED PATH EQUIVALENT
TO UNFOLDED LAURENCE BOX CONFIGURATION

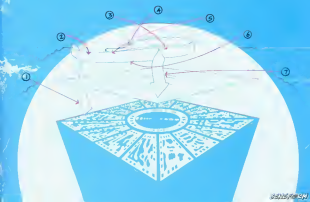
-LE MARCHAND, ARCHITECT

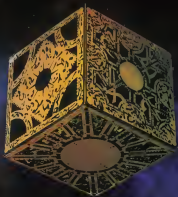
7 LEVEL PATH

- ① ROOM OF GRIEVANCE
- ② HALL OF REPULSION
- ③ GARDEN OF AFFLICTION
- ④ GALLERY OF PITY



- ⑤ FOUNTAIN OF MADNESS
- ⑥ THEATRE OF CONVULSION
- ⑦ POINT OF ANGUISH
- ⑧ JUNCTION TO OTHER WORLD





usable state. The process changed more than the stone. LeMarchand did not hesitate when it demanded that the element be steeped for 24 hours in a vat of boiling human fat.

Stephen, his loving assistant, was as thin and stoney as he was. But he was also convenient, as was the chisel that LeMarchand drove through the sleeping man's skull.

Fat, still fresh, is a liquid and Phillip's inexperience lost much of it to the floor. However, using a meat baster, he was able to suck enough from lessons made in the buttocks and inner thighs for a small experiment. After several similar ordeals, he was overjoyed when he learned that fat solidifies in refrigeration, enabling him to tear it free in large white hunks with relative ease.

One year later, Phillip LeMarchand finished his first important work, guaranteeing a meteoric rise to fame and fortune. His first working model was a simple music box. A small puzzle, based on a geometric series he called The Lament Configuration. It was a key that became the embodiment of desire that led others, as it had led himself, on a black and bloody path, where all forks lead to hell, to Leviathan, and to their own eternal damnation.

By his 88th year, Phillip LeMarchand had gone far beyond that first small puzzle. He had become one of hell's most prolific prodigies, eventually returning to his architectural education to design entire buildings that were puzzles in themselves.



Once weakened, faith can often be found down on its knees, begging for a miracle. It is a weakness that Leviathan has often exploited. Puzzles, "mysteries of faith," were scattered throughout Christendom and for centuries they remained some of hell's greatest suppliers. "The Genesis Revelation," a staff that when folded through a sequence of specific symbols of faith, reveals truths of a decidedly darker nature.

This "Genesis Revelation," is the key to a great gateway, given unto Peter and thence unto an angel. This, and a manuscript allegedly of the apostle Peter, are companion pieces. It is essential that this Testament of Peter be read in tandem with the solving of the puzzle.

The Testament of Peter

*The Servant Commanded to silence, shall
disobey. Then shall he lead the army of the lamb.*

*He will solve the key. The Lord's kingdom
shall come to earth, the servant be lifted to power.*

*All are saved by the blood of the lamb, and
these are the signs.*

This is the rod and staff of comfort

This is the grail that held His blood.

This the cross on which He died.

*This the tree that bore the fruit: this the tree of
knowledge.*

...and behold, a door will be opened.



DANSE MACABRE

1-2-3, 1-2-3.

The noose snaps taut under your chin, bladders of jump driving fast into your neck, rubbing up against that two-day growth of beard you'd meant to shave this morning and never had got around to, sweat-soaked burn friction dawning first blood... and last.

Your vertebrae snap-snap-snap along the line of a rap-tap-tap.

1-2-3, 1-2-3.

Muscles tense and jerk, your bowels out loose, warm runoff sliding down, the rolling flesh of your legs, spurring the sound of the spasming shuffle of your feet against the floorboards.

The sliding world ebbs its way down, down, down, past the couple rotting sweetly in the apartment below, past skeletons in closets and bones in the mounds.

Calms. Cools.

1-2-3, 1-2-3.

And then she's there -- and isn't that what you wanted, anyway? Her impossibly long arms to hold you close, the straight razors under her fingernails cutting deep into the still-raw mounds of your ass cheeks as she fondles you. She sweeps you off your feet, literally, lifting you up, the pressure gone from around your throat, sweet relief as the jelly of your eyeballs slips back into their sockets.

"Surrender," she whispers, promising nothing... but how can you say no?

And drops you again.

The noose snaps taut under your chin --

1-2-3, 1-2-3.

The puzzles are never alone. Guarded by "keepers," they are kept hidden, protected like secrets, treasures shrouded by shadow. Wrapped most often in human skin from the flesh vats of hell, these guardians room free of detection. They manipulate, tantalize and enthrall, dealing the keys to hell like China-white heroin. They are Leviathan's grand masters of domination game.

Wandering the fringes of our world, they follow trails scented by lust and desire. They can appear as anything they wish: a beggar on the street corner, a purring green-eyed cat that softly pads into your life on white-boated feet, or, if necessary, a creature you've seen only in your nightmares, lifting into the night sky on ghoulish tottered wings.

Often they have a home, a lair to which they can return and rest. They are usually dark and infested places hidden in sewers or under bridges, built like a rat's-nest, out of gorboge. Amidst the clutter is their collection; trophies, mementos taken from their victims. Wallets, earrings, fingers, with photographs thumb-tacked to a wall beside newspaper clippings and milk carton pictures describing those who will remain forever "missing."

"What is your pleasure, sir?"

For those seeking something new, something dark, dangerous, something to put the edge back on their dulled life, don't worry. You won't look long. Hell will surely find you.

BLEEKER ST.



I stopped, dropping the pages to the table throwing up my hands. "That's it. That's enough. All right, what's going on here? It's a joke, right? A setup isn't it? One of those hidden video things."

He leaned back, pulling a cigarette from the crushed cellophane pack with his lips.

"Do you really expect me to believe this? That this shit is real?"

He lit the cigarette. It bothered me that he wasn't looking at me anymore.

"I mean, these are just stories, horror stories based on a movie that this guy, Barker, made."

Nothing.

"How could it be true? I mean, let's suppose it was, right? How could anyone know of it? How could Barker? Unless you're saying he's part of it?"

Finally, he looked at me. "Some return."

"Return?" I was staring again, at his face and hands. I didn't have to ask. I knew what he would say. The question, I suppose, was whether I was going to believe him. "You mean, from hell? How?"

He shrugged. "They slip from their hooks, fall through a crack and suddenly, for seemingly no reason, they are here, they are free."

"At first they are too numb to do anything. They are like babies, everything seems so new, so real, and they marvel at the simplest, most meaningless things. They giggle at the smell of soap in the morning and the first taste of a cigarette brings them to tears."

"After a while, after they adjust to being back, they realize their purpose; they must tell their story, warn others away from Leviathan's trap. They have dreams of galvanizing all of humanity against this single foe, of perhaps, leading an army into hell to rescue those still writhing on hooks and nails praying for death. But their dreams remain just that, dreams. No matter how hard they shout or how loud they beat their drums, they are ignored, dismissed as lunatics, treated as pariah. Sometimes, considered dangerous, they again find themselves confined, trapped in a place between two worlds. Alone."

He sucked hard on the cigarette and crushed it out in the gold tin ashtray. His jaw clenched, his lips tightly pursed, he stared up at the fluorescent lights, letting the smoke lead out the hole in his cheek and slowly crawl up the side of his face before seeping into the air.

"Pick up that book there. Feel its weight. It's an old book. It smells like an old book. It was written in 1933. You can call the Library of Congress, check the number if you want. It's real. As real as you or I."

I turned the book over in my hands. I opened it carefully, listening to the cracking of its spine. I read and continued on.

of Hell



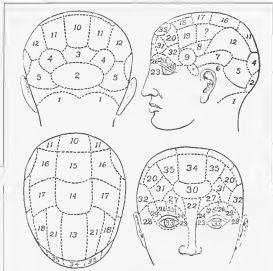
ISADORE KLAUSKI

In Leviathan's war, a war we have defined within the parameters of its goal of the restructuring of chaos; the very essence of flesh; toward a single uniformed whole, there are those who are conscripted to its cause. Many arrive in Hell to find, as I did in my tenure, that they only qualify as fodder for Leviathan's pleasure. But there is a second rank found in those brought through their own actions, into Hell's dark hallways.

In certain individuals, Leviathan sees the potential for agents to carry his war further. These individuals are enlisted as soldiers in a Legion of the Damned, and know themselves as Cenobites. Cenobites are often individuals who, through their own twisted psyches and distorted perceptions have perceived themselves as separate, even above humanity.

In their transformation, their perceptions are made real, as they are refashioned in chambers, the interiors of which I was never privileged—or damned—enough to view. Once combined or “steeped” in the darkness of Leviathan, these individuals emerge from the creation chambers with powers and abilities seemingly manifested from attributes possessed prior to the individuals arrival in Hell. It also appears that the more twisted, the more demented or guilt-ridden the “source material”, the “better” or more insidious the finished Cenobite.





In Leviathan's War on flesh, if Leviathan is the field General, the Cerebrates are It's shock troops, a dark SS carrying out Leviathan's commands. Theirs is the duty of gaining new ground and souls and recapturing those souls which have managed to slip through the cracks in Hell and escape. Poor, lost damned souls, like myself.

Through an obvious logic we may infer that Leviathan's true power is defined and thus confined by the halls of Hell. Why else would it content itself with the meager morsels that trickle into Hell through complex and convoluted pathways. Without the power to take what it wants by force, Leviathan must rely solely on the curiosity of the flesh to desire and to seek. But what animal would attempt to take bait from what it knew to be a trap? Thus, secrecy becomes Hell's highest priority and explains the importance of the Hunters.

Unfortunately, we know little about these monstrosities. They stalk those who have escaped, trapping them, dragging them back before their "stories" fall on ears that are not so deaf. Their jet-black, armored exterior makes them seemingly indestructible as they pursue their prey with the single minded purpose of a machine. Perhaps they can exist on this plane because, like the puzzles, they are carved from Leviathan. However it is allowed access to this world, it apparently remains "blind" to any flesh that has not been tainted by the presence of Leviathan.

What I write now, I write for those who bear the marks, who wear the scars that testify to the truths within this book. For you, there can be no peace. You need only pause to rest, to catch your breath and the Hunter will be upon you. I have watched their ebony cables snaking, hissing through the air, behind barbed hooks fired from housings within their armor. I have seen their prey, men and women, caught on those hooks like fish, thrashing and flailing, coughing thick pieces of blood, trying to tear themselves free. And I have listened to the screaming suddenly stop, snapped off as if with a switch, followed by a terrible silence marked only by the sharp and distinct sound of the breaking and cracking of bone.

Understand that what I say, I say not out of despair or desperation. It is only through meticulous examination and resourceful investigation that we will identify our enemy. Only after fully dissecting the strengths and weaknesses of our enemy may we begin to assemble a strategy towards its destruction.



For the ambitious hell is, by no means, a dead end. Leviathan often recruits humans to aid in its war, offering a reprieve from their suffering in proportion to the number of victims they lure into the pits. Many at first seem eager to betray their own kind. Misery, after all, does love company. But once it begins, once they hear the screams, the agony of those damned, few find they have the stomach for it. Fewer still, enjoyed it as she did.

For a while there was a number you could call. It was listed in the "adult services" section of the "Reader." It was a small ad that read, "I know what you want."

Some of them were rich, some were poor. It didn't matter where they came from, they were all the same: filled with hate. For their wives. For their mothers.

She would meet them at a hotel, wearing what they wanted, a skin-tight mini-skirt, stiletto heels and lots of lipstick. The room was always dark except for the desk lamp directed like a spot-light at her. No words were spoken. There were only sounds: a zipper eased open, his breathing growing labored, the creaking of leather as she slid her skirt over the fullness of her hips. It was always the same.

Once she was nude, it became interesting. She wondered what went through their twisted little minds as she dug her sharp, red nails into her own flesh and began to peel off her skin in long, tan ribbons. She would watch their eyes, white in the shadows wide with their frenzy as she pulled the final piece of skin from her face, tossing it casually like an elbow length glove, or a feathered boa. Standing amidst the wrinkled and bloody piles of discarded "veils," her muscles, bones and organs exposed, wet and shimmering in the light, she would smile at them. Then, quite easily, she would take the knife they were usually clutching between their hands and offer them the puzzle. She would whisper that if, when they solved the puzzle, she would be theirs. Leaving them alone, she usually went to the powder room to "freshen up" and to wait. There she would remind herself what these men were, what they liked, and what they had probably done.

When it began, she would calmly step out and offer her congratulations "Welcome to Hell, lover." Then she would gather her things and leave. She really only enjoyed their first scream. After that, it was always the same.



The Cenobites. The blue-skinned Angels of Order; jack-booted generals that stand supreme above all the weapons of hell. One of the first-born, an obese and cow-like horror called Grillard was charged by his god with the dissection and disintegration of the power of human religion, a task he continues to relish for its simple and obvious ease.

"Deliver me, Holy Spirit. Deliver me but a single sign. I know this world soothes with all manner of evil and wicked incarnate, but I am blind." Prior Heinrich Kramer fell to his knees. "Use me as an instrument of your light, Holy Spirit, fill me as a vessel with your righteous might and guide me as a knife into the heart of your enemies."

As the Dean of Cologne pressed his lips to the toes of the blue-skinned "Holy Spirit," Grillard couldn't help but giggle.

Epona stepped into the circle of oaks, opening her long, naked arms to the bright glow of the full moon. A pagan, healer and mid-wife, she lived high in the hills above Cologne where she might dance for her mother Goddess alone and without fear. She swung her head back, spinning, her toes beginning to dig into the soft moss, her hair whipping round as she danced, drawing down the moon, letting the cool night air rush over her naked flesh that sparkled, droplets of sweat, thrown like stars against the night.

The stag entered the grove. She stopped. He was beautiful, his horns rising like a crown above his head. His eyes flashed, a perfect black set against the tan and white of his fur.

He spoke, "Greetings, Epona."

She smiled, wiping the sweat from her lips. "Welcome."

He stood beside her and she ran her hands over his flank, feeling the strength beneath his short-haired coat. "You are beautiful," she told him. She touched his face, and closing her eyes, she kissed him.

Hidden in the hushes, Dean Kramer prayed as the stag moved behind the woman. He clutched at the strange staff the Holy Spirit had given him as the animal mounted her and began to change, transform before his eyes, to a half-man, half-beastial, entirely unholy visage of evil. Kramer leapt from hiding and ran without once looking back.

In thirteen days, his treatise was completed: *The Malleus Maleficarum* or *Witch Hammer*. Three days later Epona was found guilty of consorting with the devil. Her hands and feet had been crushed and, unable to walk or even crawl, she was dragged with a cord around her neck through the streets to the square where she was tied to a stake and burned. She was the first of millions.

In hell, Grillard laughed until he wept. Two religions with a single stroke.

MALLEVS MALEFICARVM, MALEFICAS ET EARVM

hæresim frameâ conterens,

EX VARIIS AVCTORIBVS COMPILATVS,
& in quatuor Tomos iustè distributus,

*PRIMUM DVO PRIORES VANAS DÆMONVM
versutias, præstigiosas eorum delusiones, supersticiosas Strigimagarum
ceremonias, horrendos etiam cum illis congressus; exaltam denique
tam pestifera secta disquisitionem, & punitionem complectantur.
Tertius præxim Exorcistarum ad Dæmonum, & Strigimagarum male-
ficia de Christi fidelibus pellenda; Quartus verò Artem Dæmonicam,
Benedictionalem, & Exorcismalem continent.*

TOMVS PRIMVS.

Indices Auctorum, capitum, rerumque non desunt.

Editio nouissima, infinitis penè mendis expurgata; cuique accessit Fuga
Dæmonum & Complementum artis exorcisticæ.

*Vir sine muliere in quibus Pythæicus, vel diuinationis fuerit spiritus, morte moriatur
Leuitici cap. 10.*



LFSDVN1.

Sumptibus CLAYDII BOVRGEAT, sub signo Mercurij Galli.

M. DC. LXIX.

CVM PRIVILEGIO REGIS.





The second Jarot frump, a symbol of the moon, of water, of the power of woman. The High Priestess of a deck rarely available in the local occult bookstore. Each card is painstakingly reproduced in exacting detail by hand. Each painted with scented pigments of unknown origins. Each yet easily priceless, but for some, available simply for the asking.

She remains one of the most elusive of the Cenobites, a far cry from her sister, Major, the extrovert, preferring to wield her power with a subtle grace that few in hell could manage. Though she is now given the respect due the rank of Cenobite, there was, as is typical for all new Cenobites, a challenge.

"Greetings, Brother Grillard."

The misshapen Cenobite slopped with his tongue as the droll dripping from his hooked lip. "Greetings, Sister. How Goes the War?"

"Precisely."

"Excellent, Sister, excellent." He smiled at her. Resuming her work, she turned her back on him only for a moment, but it was enough. She felt his fleshy body slam against her, his arms locking around her waist.

"You know, I remember you. Before you were my sister, when your skin was still soft and pink." His breath was rank and hot on her neck as his hands began to graze for her breasts.

"Oh yes, I remember. You once had such silky, pretty blonde hair. Do you remember how I dyed it for you; red, bright, sticky red? In truth, she did not."

Once it began, with that first ringing scream of metal to metal, it was clear who was the superior warrior; her chains, searing, whipping, slashing expertly as the din of battle clamored throughout all of hell. It did not last long.

"It appears Lord Leviathan made a minor miscalculation when it re-made you, Grillard." She razored open the top of his skull and emptied it. He tried begging but it was too late. She took hold of him, at the "root of his problem" and pulled, stretching it farther and farther until finally it snapped off like a rubber tub. He screamed. She then stuffed what she had in her hand where his brains had been and re-sealed the skull.

"I think Leviathan will approve, don't you, Brother Grillard?"

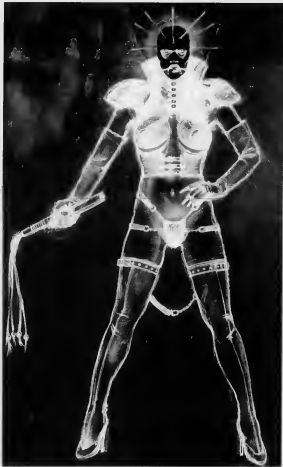
"Oh yes, Sister. Fine work. Excellent work."

She released him. "Your apology accepted. Goodbye, Grillard."

"Thank you, Sister, thank you."

Quickly he turned, hunched like a dog with its tail lost between its legs, and ran.





No one knows how long ago she became a child of the Dark God; but it is whispered that when Leviathan first saw her, it tasted desire. Some believe it was she that once sat upon a throne of purple and gold sucking the juice from black grapes as Mark Anthony, on his knees, washed her feet. Others swear that it was her long, bright-gold hair that brought all of Sparta to bear against the walls of Troy. Who she might have been matters little to who she is now.

"The Lady Abigor," the herald announced and quickly stepped out of the way.

The whip boomed and cracked as the chariot rounded the corner, ivory wheels clattering against the stone floor. With the reins gathered in one hand, Abigor cracked her whip again across the backs of her steeds; time, long-haired blood men harnessed and tethered by heavy straps of human-leather with bits made from bone wedged between their teeth, all of whom had been re-made with the joints in their knees reversed so that they may prance with an appropriate elegance and a more befitting gait.

She reined the chariot to a halt and stepped down. Smiling politely, she walked through the room crowded with her Brothers and Sisters. She was dressed only in her thigh-high boots and the shimmering, steel jewelry pierced through all parts of her body that jingled as she moved. Usually she enjoyed these "victory celebrations," but she had come for something else.

He was standing in the far, dark corner of the room when she found him; a sinister Cenobite called Halo who wore a circle of metal hypodermic needles set in the crown of his head.

"Abigor." His lips curled up over black teeth. She detested him.

"I've heard that you have found something quite unusual."

He laughed. "Word spreads here as easily as blood spills."

Her fist clenched. "Where?"

"On the edge of my realm. It was growing up through what was left of an abdomen I think, some rotting piece I'd long forgotten about."

She looked him in the eye. "I want it."

He was still smiling, starting to shake his head. "I'm to take it out the next time a gate is opened and destroy it."

Her razor-edged nails slipped along his arm as she stroked it.

"Halo, listen to me. I want it and I will do anything for it."

His pale blue lips lost their smile, "Anything?"

She nodded once. "Anything."

Allegor returned to her realm and waited. The silent slaves continued to scrub the floors, wringing the blood into buckets with a clump of knotted tongues. Her servants gently massaged her, rubbing in the warm jasmine-scented blood that dyed her flesh from blue to the dark purple that she loved. Her eyes, half-closed, drifted across the wall entered with her last life, vivid pictures of her that her own d-beans rarely allowed to be taken when she traveled to the "other world." When, suddenly, Hana opened.

She pumped, with the table and with gasps of her fingers, the servants were gone. "You keep it?"

He nodded, unable to speak. She could barely control herself as he reached to hold the glowing her heart. It felt as though a tiny, its green veins stretched its small white thorns, partly crushed a string of muskies. She grabbed it. "Name, your price."

"Twenty." She watched him, his sharp yellow eyes, knowing full well what he would say. "I want to live again."

"Do you know what that means?"

"A hundred."

"You will be dead again."

His words were almost a whisper. "Do try to."

She smiled. She knew Lethal than would be angry, but she could handle this. Once the deed was done, he was human again. She took her time for his pleasure as well as hers, tearing off one and piece of her hair and would shut him. She dug out the last strands of her eyes and watched them for a while before discarding them as if they were like wiggling worms. By the time she was finished, he was spread upon the floor a quivering mass of flesh, and that his four slaves were already beginning to wrap up into his skin.

Lying on her massage table again, she called out the maids and the book she had to read a long time ago. She took a deep, upright breath, her long back began to crack. "Break it to me again."

The book spoke in a high pitched voice. "The seeds of Chaos landed in the womb of Order, in a womb that has been done."

She closed the book, hid it in the mattress inside. She dropped and its servants a pair of and continued their story. "With it, that has been done." She closed her eyes and smiled. "Indeed."

DOMINATION

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**NOTHING BEATS
THIS ISSUE!**

**CHAINS AND PAIN
THE PATH TO PLEASURE**

**ATHLETIC
COUPLES
FIT TO BE
TIED**





The young prostitute snapped his gum, as the large African set a small dining placement for two. He lit two candles and checked his watch. It was time.

"Look, big boy, can we get down to business?"

"Shut up."

The African kneeled and began chanting, as his fingers worked fluidly over the lament configuration, just as they had so many times before. Just as his father had that first time. The god had descended on him demanding his perfect newborn child as compensation. His father promised to deliver the god one hundred men if he would spare his son. Hunger agreed on the condition that he dine with the god on every soul. By the eighty fifth man, the African's father had died of trichinosis and Hunger came to claim the African. The cannibite spared him when he gave the god his fiancée and promised to honor the contract and deliver the last fourteen souls. The prostitute was the one hundredth.

The door to hell ground open, as the final piece of the lament configuration slipped into place. The cannibite stepped from the portal, ribbons of heat twisting up from his dark blue skin.

"You're late," Hunger growled.

The prostitute was entranced by Hunger. By his appetite. The electric knife went through the length of the man's thigh speckling the African with red. The prostitute heard and felt nothing, as they feasted on his flesh. A waterfall of gore, the blood fell from the cutting board to the floor rushing towards a drain set in the black and white tile. The deep blues and reds of his wounds clashed nicely with the green of the parsley garnish the African applied. They ate in silence until only bones remained.

"Keep your day job. You're a terrible cook," Hunger belched.

"The deal's done. One hundred men," the African replied.

"Yes, the deal is done. You have staved off Hunger's appetite. One hundred men for the perfect child."





My coffee had grown cold. The package of cigarettes lay matted in a ball beside the tin ashtray filled with brown butts each ground and bent. The prophet was up now, pacing, gesturing furiously at me.

"Can you see them now? Can you? They're there! They're always there. Waiting. For me! For you!"

I was sweating.

"Can you see it now? Hell? Can you smell the blood? Deep, rancid, puddles of it covering ~~the~~ the floor."

My eyes began to burn.

"Can you hear it? Listen—there it is! Over and over, like the husking of the corn; flesh being ripped, torn from bone—"

"Stop it! Stop it, please!"

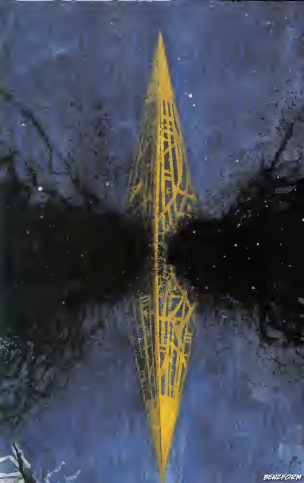
He whirled, his ruined lips trying to smile. "You can see it, can't you?"

I nodded, wiping the sting from my eyes.

"Good. You know the world. Now you are ready to know its creator, its god: Leviathan. You are ready for the final truth though you will rebel against it! You will try to deny it, run ~~away~~ from it! But you can't now. You are as trapped as I am!"

He pulled a final piece from the bag and laid it on the table. It was a photograph of a cave drawing. Somehow, I knew it was real.

His voice hissed at me like a knife, "Leviathan is our father! The father of man!"



IT WAS NOT LEVIATHAN THAT FIRST UNLOCKED THE DOOR TO THIS WORLD. RATHER IT WAS LIFE, NATURE, CHAOS THAT EXPLODED THROUGH IT, SPILLING INTO HIS PERFECT ORDER. EONS AGO, WHEN THIS WORLD WAS TEEMING, SWIRLING, SWEATING LIFE, BLUE AND GREEN, FROM EVERY PORE, IT CONTINUED TO SWELL, LIKE MOTHER WITH CHILD, FINALLY, RUPTURING THROUGH THE WALLS IT DID NOT EVEN KNOW EXISTED, IT BURST INTO HELL, GIVING BIRTH TO LIGHT, AND INTRODUCING LIFE IN THAT COLD DARK PLACE.

LEVIATHAN, OF COURSE, RETALIATED, GRINDING AND CRUSHING CHAOTIC LIFE EVEN AS IT TRIED TO SPREAD, PULLING IT FROM THE CRACKS IN HELL'S MORTAR UNTIL IT LAY IN ROTTING HEAPS UPON THE FLOOR. BUT IN TIME, LIFE WAS AGAIN AT LEVIATHAN'S DOOR, SQUIRMING THROUGH EVERY HOLE, CRAWLING, LIKE IVY OVER THE GATES AND WALLS, IN SEARCH OF A ROOM. HELL WAS OVERWHELMED AND AS GREEN BEGAN TO COVER THE GREY, ONE WORLD LOOKED MORE AND MORE LIKE THE OTHER.

LEVIATHAN RE-CALCULATED ITS POSITION AND DEVISED A NEW STRATEGY, AN EUCLIDIAN DESIGN OF APOCALYPTIC PROPORTIONS, SEARCHING ACROSS THE ENTIRE FACE OF ITS ENEMY, THE HOT-SMELLING,

PULSATING WORLD THAT IT DESPISED. NOW MORE THAN EVER, LEVIATHAN FOUND WHAT IT WAS LOOKING FOR: NAKED, SOFT AND WEAK, CRINGING IN THE MUD ON ITS BELLY: MAN.

ON A BLACK AND STARLESS NIGHT, LEVIATHAN DESCENDED TO MAN IN HIS DREAMS. IT WHISPERED TO HIM THE KEYS OF LOGIC IN THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF SCIENCE THAT COULD ONLY DESCRIBE THE VISIONS THAT BURNED IN HIS MIND: OF SPREADING FLAME THAT DANCED BENEATH HIS FINGERTIPS, OF TOLLS, OF MACHINES, OF WEAPONS, OF ALL THINGS GLORIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT. LEVIATHAN SHOWED HIM HOW TO USE THESE AGAINST HIS WORLD, THAT HE MAY BRING ALL LIFE AROUND HIM TO ITS KNEES, BEND IT TO HIS WILL AND DESTROY ALL THAT STOOD IN HIS WAY.

MAN SHOOK FROM SLEEP, CHEST HEAVING, WET WITH SWEAT. HE WALKED OUT OF HIS CAVE TO THE CLIFF'S EDGE AND LOOKED OUT OVER THE EXPANSE OF DARK JUNGLE THAT MOVED LIKE AN OCEAN OF SHADOW BENEATH HIM. HE WAS NO LONGER AFRAID AND STANDING ON THE EDGE OF THAT ABYSS, MAN SMILED.

NO SOONER HAD HE RISEN FROM THE MUD, THAN HE WAS REACHING FOR HIS FIRST WEAPON AND LAYING WASTE TO EVERYTHING AROUND HIM. HE SLAUGHTERED HIS ENEMIES, STEALING THEIR SKINS, AS NO



CREATURE EVER HAD, TO DRAPE OVER HIS OWN. HE GREW DOMINANT, EATING WHAT HE WANTED AND LEAVING WHAT REMAINED TO FESTER AND ROT IN THE SUN.

THE WORLD BEGAN TO BLEED. ITS OPEN WOUNDS, SEETHING WITH PARASITES, BECAME INFECTED. ITS FACE, SWOLLEN AND PUSTULANT, BEGAN TO PUTREFY. ITS LIMBS GREW DISEASED AND FELL AWAY. FINALLY, IT LAY, WEAK AND HELPLESS, GROWING ONLY MORE SILENT AND MORE STILL, WITHERING, WANING, DYING.

DURING THIS TIME, HELL WAS ONCE MORE RETURNED TO ITS PERFECT ORDER BUT FOR LEVIATHAN THAT WAS NO LONGER ENOUGH. IT AGAIN VISITED THE DREAMS OF MAN, CHOOSING WELL ITS APOSTLES TO SET DOWN ITS GOSPEL. NONE DID SO WITH MORE CONVICTION THAN ISSAC, WHO TESTIFIED THAT NATURE, ALL NATURE COULD BE BOUND COMPLETELY WITH THE LAWS OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS. THERE WERE OTHERS: RENEE, FRANCIS, JOHN, ADAM, AND LATER CHARLES. THE GREAT APOSTLES OF HELL LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR LEVIATHAN'S DARK DESIGN. EVENTUALLY, WITH EVERY FOOT OF CONCRETE STEAM-ROLLED OVER THE FACE OF ITS ENEMY, WITH EVERY TOWERING, SKY-BLOTING MONOLITH ERECTED, ONE WORLD LOOKED MORE AND MORE LIKE THE OTHER.

Somewhere, far off, across the lake, the sun had begun its crawl into the sky, as the streets outside brighten from black to cold gray. The prophet took the cups and the ashtray and pushed them through the swinging "Thank You" door of the garbage.

I stared at the pile of art.

He walked over and slipped his sign back over his head. I watched him start towards the door.

"Wait! What are you doing? You can't leave. What about all this stuff?"

He turned. "It's yours now. Take it. Show others. Try to make them believe. Before it's too late."

"Too late? What, too late?"

He became ~~more~~ angry. "Don't you see, yet? We're all that's left. Of chaos! Of life! All that stands between Leviathan and eternal order. This is the final conflict; the Apocalypse, the Darkest Day wherein the father shall seek to destroy the child; The War of Flesh!"

He was ranting, violently shaking his bell as though he were trying to wake the entire city.

"If it's true, then how can I believe you?" He stopped.

"This could all be lies. Leviathan might have sent you back to spread these stories to 'entice and seduce.' Yesterday a carnival, today, a movie and tomorrow - ?" I lifted the pile. "How do you know your picture doesn't belong here?"

Something in his voice scared me, "You don't."

I wanted to leave. To wake up. I stood, tossing the pile back to the table. "What am I doing here?"

I looked back at him. I suppose it was the morning light, but now he no longer seemed as grotesque or surreal as he had in the dark of midnight. I saw now that the sign he wore was poorly painted, brown drips hanging from every letter. Though ~~because~~ his face was scarred, it now seemed more ugly than unnatural. He stood facing me, his shoulders drooped, his bell hanging listlessly from his hand. With every passing moment he grew more and more pathetic.

"This is ridiculous. I can't believe I'm taking this shit seriously."

His head hung low, sad. "It's always the same." He walked toward me, pulling something deep from the pocket of his heavy overcoat. Stopping directly in front of me, he stared at my face, squinting like someone looking into a mirror that was fogged or broken. I listened to his breath struggling to find its way through his nose.

"Prove it to yourself, if you must." He set it down on the table, on top of the pile.

A puzzle box.

I never saw him again. I took his collection and transcribed each of the stories he had told. I don't know what became of him. I don't know if what I did was ~~right~~ right. Or another part of Leviathan's plan. I don't know if I belong in a rubber room or on a street corner with a sign and bell. Even now, I don't know really if Leviathan exists. Or hell. Or anything else I've written here. I don't know if I could. I still have it. I keep it locked in my desk drawer, but sometimes when ~~late~~ I'm tired, when I can't do, all the questions, the not-knowing, I take it out and hold it, sometimes pressed to my ear like a sea-shell, listening, listening for the roar, for the railing screams of another world, for the truth. For me it is enough. Now I can only hope ~~that~~ and pray for you, reader, that all you have heard here, all of this, will likewise be ~~enough~~ enough, and that you need not learn for yourself how utterly and completely the truth can hurt.





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